

FACT SHEET • COLLEGE

Helping Your Young Person Manage Pressure

College years bring real pressure: exams that matter, decisions about what comes next, work, money and a social life. Some pressure is useful; it focuses the mind. The job is to help your young person notice when it tips from useful into overwhelming, and to know what to do about it. These five tips are the ones that help most.



TIP 1

Ask, do not assume

What looks like stress about exams is often something else entirely. Start with a question rather than a solution.

TIP 2

Break the mountain up

Overwhelm comes from looking at all of it at once. One subject, one afternoon, one task written down. That is where progress starts.

TIP 3

Keep the basics running

Sleep, food, daylight and some movement are not extras. When pressure rises they are the first things to go and the first things to restore.

TIP 4

Separate worth from results

Be clear, out loud, that your view of them does not change with a grade. That one sentence takes a surprising amount of weight off.

TIP 5

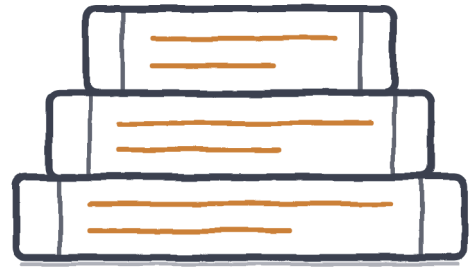
Name the next step, not the whole future

Decisions about the future feel final at this age. Talk about the next step only, and about how many routes lead to the same place.

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Helping Your Young Person Prepare for Exams

By college, exams carry more weight than ever before, and the revision habits that got your young person through school do not scale up to college level exams. Timetables get longer, content increases, and the temptation is to revise everything at once. A few small shifts in how they prepare make a real difference. Here is where to start.

**TIP 1****Help them plan backwards**

Start from the exam date and work back, marking out what needs covering each week. A rough plan beats no plan, even if it changes as they go.

TIP 2**Encourage short, focused sessions**

Revising for hours in one sitting rarely works. Suggest revising one topic and then a proper break. It is the quality of attention that counts, not the hours logged.

TIP 3**Practise the way they'll be tested**

Reading notes feels like revision but does not prepare anyone for an exam paper. Past papers and timed questions, even a few, teach more than another read-through.

TIP 4**Watch for revision as avoidance**

Endless colour-coding and rewriting notes can be a way of feeling busy without engaging with the hard bits. Ask what they are actually finding difficult.

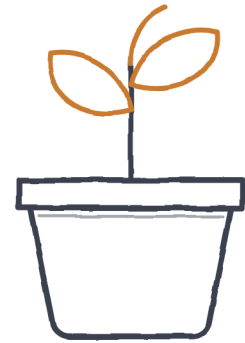
TIP 5**Protect the days before**

The final 48 hours are for consolidation and rest, not cramming new material. A calm evening before an exam often counts for more than a late one.

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Helping Your Young Person Build Confidence

Confidence at this age is rarely steady. A young person who seems sure of themselves at home can feel completely out of their depth in a new class, an interview or in front of new people, and they will often keep that quiet. Comparing themselves to peers who look like they have it all worked out does not help. A little goes a long way here.



TIP 1

Notice effort, not just outcomes

Praise the work that went in; the draft, the practice, the attempt, rather than only the result. It teaches them that trying counts, whatever the mark.

TIP 2

Let them struggle a little

Stepping in too fast to fix a problem sends the message that you doubt they can manage it. Let them wrestle with something first, then help if they ask.

TIP 3

Widen what counts as success

A single grade or one bad interview can feel like the whole picture. Point out the other things going well; a friendship, a hobby, a kindness, so nothing carries all the weight.

TIP 4

Model getting things wrong yourself

Talk about a mistake you made and what you did next. Hearing that adults get things wrong too makes their own setbacks feel ordinary rather than catastrophic.

TIP 5

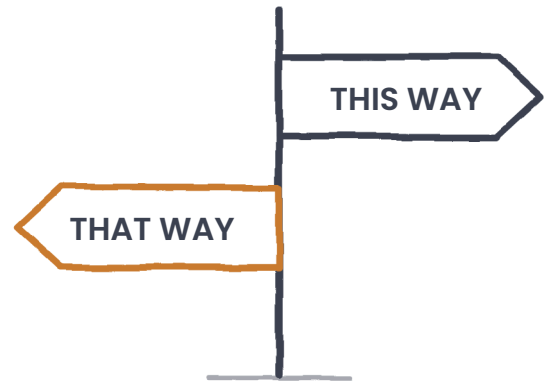
Back their own decisions sometimes

Confidence grows from making a choice and living with it, even a small one like which course option to pick. Resist correcting every decision they make.

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Helping Your Young Person Make Decisions

Between sixteen and eighteen the decisions stack up fast: which course, which path after college, whether to take a job, who to spend time with. Each one can feel final, because at this age nothing has been decided before and there is no evidence yet that a wrong turn can be corrected. A calmer approach to choosing helps more than the decision itself.

**TIP 1****Ask what matters to them**

Before offering your own view, ask what they are weighing up and why. It shows the decision is theirs, and it often surfaces the real question underneath.

TIP 2**Slow big decisions down**

A choice that feels urgent rarely needs deciding today. Suggest sleeping on it, or talking it through twice on different days, so panic does not make the call.

TIP 3**Offer information, not instructions**

Share what you know or can find out, then step back. A young person who feels told what to do is more likely to resist it, even when you are right.

TIP 4**Normalise changing your mind**

Point out that a course, a job or a plan can be swapped later if it is not working. Most decisions at this age are a first attempt, not a life sentence.

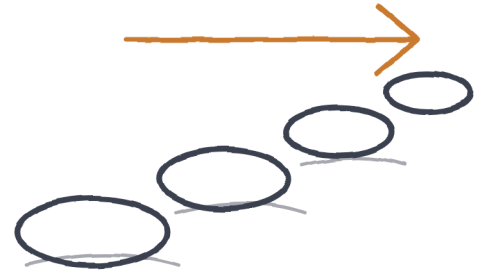
TIP 5**Separate the decision from the worry**

Sometimes the anxiety is not about the choice itself but about disappointing someone. Ask directly whether that is what is going on.

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Helping Your Young Person Prepare for the Future

As college draws to a close, the questions about what comes next get louder: university, an apprenticeship, a job, or a year finding out what they actually want. Many young people feel they should already have a clear plan, when in fact very few of their peers do either. Helping them prepare well is less about giving answers and more about building readiness for whatever comes.



TIP 1

Separate the plan from the person

Having no clear plan yet does not mean they are behind. Say so plainly, so the pressure to have it all sorted does not become the main story.

TIP 2

Build practical independence early

Cooking a meal, managing money, doing a load of washing; small skills matter more once they leave home. Hand over one task at a time rather than all at once.

TIP 3

Talk about routes, not one path

Show that university, apprenticeships and work are all valid ways forward, and that people move between them. This takes the pressure off picking the one "right" route.

TIP 4

Let them lead the research

Encourage them to look into options themselves, through open days, prospectuses and people already doing the job, rather than handing them a plan you have worked out.

TIP 5

Keep the door open for after

Whatever they choose, make clear you are still there once it starts, not just until decisions are made. That reassurance often matters more than the decision itself.